CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1.   A method for determining which advertisements to include with electronic content

2   delivered to users over a network, the method comprising the steps of:

3   storing sequence information that indicates a sequence for a plurality of

4   advertisements, wherein each of said plurality of advertisements is associated

5   with corresponding delivery criteria;

6   receiving a request to provide over said network a piece of electronic content that

7   includes a slot for an advertisement;

8   comparing slot attributes of said slot with delivery criteria of said advertisements to

9   determine a subset of said plurality of advertisements which qualify for

10   inclusion in said slot; and

11   from said subset of advertisements, selecting an advertisement to include in the slot

12   based, at least in part, on relative positions, within said sequence, of the

13   advertisements in said subset.

1   2.   The method of Claim 1 wherein:

2   each advertisement of said plurality of advertisements has a corresponding delivery

3   obligation; and

4   the relative position of advertisements in said sequence corresponds to when the

5   corresponding delivery obligation was incurred.

1   3.   The method of Claim 2 wherein the step of selecting an advertisement to include

2   includes selecting a first advertisement instead of a second advertisement because the

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3   delivery obligation associated with the first advertisement was incurred before the delivery

4   obligation associated with the second advertisement was incurred.

1   4.   The method of Claim 1 wherein:

2   each advertisement of said plurality of advertisements has a corresponding delivery

3   obligation;

4   the method further comprises the step of determining which advertisements in the

5   plurality of advertisements are associated with delivery obligations that are

6   not on track to be satisfied; and

7   the step of determining a subset of said plurality of advertisements which qualify for

8   inclusion in said slot includes selecting for said subset only advertisements

9   that are associated with delivery obligations that are not on track to be

10   satisfied.

1   5.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of comparing slot attributes of said slot with

2   delivery criteria of said advertisements to determine a subset of said plurality of

3   advertisements which qualify for inclusion in said slot is performed in response to receiving

4   said request.

1   6.   The method of Claim 5 wherein:

2   the request was made by a specific user; and

3   at least one of said slot attributes, which are used to determine which advertisements

4   qualify for inclusion in said slot, corresponds to information associated with

5   the specific user.

1   7.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the piece of electronic content is a web page.

1   8.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the piece of electronic content is a video stream.

1   9.   The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

2   associating a priority level with each of said plurality of advertisements; and

3   filtering out of said subset all advertisements that have a priority class that is lower

4   than the priority class of any other advertisement that belongs to said subset.

1   10.   The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of filtering out of said subset all

2   advertisements that are associated with delivery obligations that are on track to be satisfied.

1   11.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 1.

1   12.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 2.

1   13.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 3.

1   14.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 4.

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1   15.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 5.

1   16.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 6.

1   17.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 7.

1   18.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 8.

1   19.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 9.

1   20.   A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions which,

2   when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the

3   method recited in Claim 10.

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